



Illinois Department of Transportation



COMMUNITY CONNECTION

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT and PHASE I DESIGN REPORT ISSUE 2 - WINTER 2008 NEWSLETTER

A Message From IDOT:

Through the Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS) process, IDOT has continued to educate and engage community stakeholders. Over the past five months members of the Project Study Group (PSG) have met with many stakeholders and stakeholder groups who all have a vested interest in the US 30 project. The first round of meetings has been to discuss this phase of the project, solicit input and address any project related concerns. As you read through the newsletter you will read more about the results of the meetings.

Another requirement of CSS is the creation of a Community Advisory Group (CAG). The PSG has worked closely with the CAG to discuss overall project related characteristics, community issues and resources as well as identifying transportation problems in the area. This edition of the newsletter will highlight the first two CAG meetings and the next steps.

The community's commitment to "Get Involved" by volunteering their time and talent will assist the PSG with thoroughly evaluating environmental and engineering issues brought forth during the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and Phase I Design Report as required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS).

I encourage the community to "Stay Involved" as the project moves forward during the study phase. Please contact the project hotline at 1-866-Route30 (1-866-768-8330) if you would like for a representative to meet with you or your group to discuss the project status.

Sincerely,

George Ryan

Deputy Director/Region 2 Engineer



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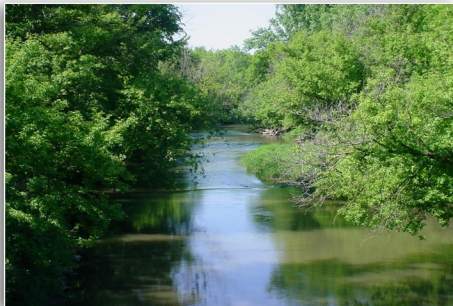
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Elkhorn Creek

Community's Context Is Identified

Prior to the first CAG meeting, CAG members were asked to complete a Community Context Audit Form. The purpose of this audit was twofold. First to be a guide in identifying various community characteristics that make each transportation project unique to its residents, businesses and the general public. Secondly, the audit is designed to take into account the community's history and heritage, present conditions and anticipated conditions, mobility, safety, local and regional economics, aesthetics, and overall quality of life.

The audit process lays the ground work for developing a community context by identifying and analyzing transportation problems within the community, identifying and analyzing solutions, and recommending preferred Context Sensitive Solutions. The audit will be revisited and updated throughout the project development process to ensure project implementation is sensitive to the community and the environment.

Information gathered through the use of the audit form will aid the CAG and the PSG in defining the Problem Statement for the project. The Problem Statement identifies the project's need and the fundamental problems in the study area. The Problem Statement is a guide for developing the project's Purpose & Need Statement, which in turn specifically defines and outlines the problems in the study area and need for the project.

After reviewing and analyzing all of the completed forms submitted by CAG members, the PSG were able to identify several community characteristics, issues, and resources that CAG members stated were important factors to the community.

The list below identifies the top 5 community context factors of importance.

- **Agricultural Land Use and Access**
- **Infrastructure and Railroad Crossings**
- **Economic Development and Local Area Planning**
- **Natural Features**
- **Historical Characteristics**



Morrison-Rockwood State Park

Project Study Group Continues to Meet with Stakeholders

The project study team has been proactively meeting with community stakeholders in the project area to identify community interest as it relates to the US 30 project.

In recent months, several meetings were held with elected officials, community leaders, business leaders, civic groups, developers, special interest groups, and environmental groups, just to name a few. The meetings were held to discuss the status of the US 30 project and garner input as to what key issues should be considered as the team begins to assess and evaluate environmental and engineering criteria. While meeting with various stakeholders, the project team has been informed of numerous key interests including funding, agricultural impacts, access, school bus safety, project timeline, railroad crossings, economic development, environmental concerns, and regional coordination, as well as business and property impacts.

The project study team considers the information provided by stakeholder groups to be a valuable asset to the development of the US 30 project. If you and/or your organization would like a representative to present to your group, please contact our project hotline at 1-866-ROUTE30 (1-866-768-8330).



Stakeholder meeting with Senator Barack Obama's Field Representative Seamus Ahern: I-r Gil Janes (HR Green), Rebecca Marruffo (IDOT), Vic Modeer (Volkert) and Seamus Ahern (Field Representative for Senator Barack Obama)



Mayor Amy Viering (City of Sterling) at a US 30 Stakeholder Meeting



Rebecca Marruffo (IDOT) presents at a US 30 Stakeholder Meeting

Consensus Garnered on Problem Statement

One of the tasks completed by the Community Advisory Group was the development of a Problem Statement for the project. This required process by CSS defines the transportation problem within the study boundary. The Problem Statement helps with developing the project's federally required Purpose and Need Statement, which drives the process for alternative consideration, in-depth analysis, and ultimately the selection of a recommended alternative.

The first step in developing the Problem Statement was to identify and categorize several key issues CAG members believed were important to the area. After highlighting several key issues, members then began the next exercise of narrowing the issues down to the top five:

- 1) Social Economic
- 2) Safety
- 3) Access
- 4) Agriculture
- 5) Roadway Characteristics

CAG members then utilized these five key issues to develop individual problem statements as a group exercise. These statements were then combined and discussed resulting in the following problem statement:

The problem with US 30 in Whiteside County from Fulton to Rock Falls is increasing traffic volume and congestion which overloads the area-wide traffic system, compromises safety, mobility and reduces the quality of life of the adjacent communities. There is a need for improved economic development and accessibility to the region while preserving agricultural and environmentally significant areas.

This problem statement will not only help to define the project's Purpose and Need, but will also serve as a point of focus for future CAG meetings.



Community Advisory Group Members Commit To Partnership

As a gesture of commitment and understanding, CAG members signed a partnership agreement with IDOT and the FHWA to aid in the development of key aspects of the EIS and Phase I Design Report for the US 30 project. The EIS and Design Report will fully evaluate the benefits and impacts of constructing an enhanced transportation system along US 30 from east of Fulton and to the west of Rock Falls in Whiteside County.

PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

MISSION STATEMENT

The Community Advisory Group (CAG) will work in coordination with the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) to aid in the development of key aspects of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and Phase I Design Report for the US 30 project. The EIS and Design Report will fully evaluate the benefits and impacts of constructing an enhanced transportation system along US 30 from east of Fulton and to the west of Rock Falls in Whiteside County.

OBJECTIVES

The primary goals and objectives of the Community Advisory Group include the following:

- Focus on specific issues that may affect specific parts of the community, such as business interests, neighborhoods, farm land, historical sites, natural features, and tourism.
- Assist the study team by providing input and advice as the project moves forward.
- Share project information and solicit input with respective interest groups.

These primary goals and objectives are met through ground rules and specific roles and responsibilities that CAG members agreed upon. These goals and objectives have been established to promote unity, trust, and team work with the Project Study Group (PSG) as well as stakeholders in the community whom they represent.

Community Advisory Group Roles:

- Identify criteria that reflects the ideas and interests of the community.
- Develop a problem statement.
- Participate in exercises to visualize and suggest engineering and aesthetic concepts for enhancing the project.
- Provide ideas and information to be directly used in the development of project documents and the potential corridors and alignments of US 30.

Community Advisory Group Responsibilities:

- Attend meetings designed to share project related information and to elicit input
- Members are responsible for sharing the information they learn with the groups they represent
- Members must bring the various perspectives of their representative groups to the CAG discussion

CAG Ground Rules:

- All input from all participants in the process is valued and considered.
- The role of the CAG is to advise the PSG, which will make the ultimate project recommendations to the leadership of IDOT and FHWA. A consensus of CAG members and stakeholders is sought, but the ultimate decisions are the responsibility of IDOT, FHWA, and the State of Illinois.
- All participants must keep an open mind and participate openly and honestly.
- Consensus is defined as the majority of the stakeholders in agreement, with the minority agreeing that their input was considered.
- All participants in the process must treat each other with respect and dignity.
- The list of CAG members is subject to revision at any time.
- Minutes of all CAG's contacts will be maintained by the PSG, with the content subject to stakeholder concurrence.
- The project must progress at a reasonable pace, based on the original project schedule.
- The PSG will make all final recommendations with a goal of seeking all stakeholder consensuses.
- All decisions by the IDOT, FHWA, and State of Illinois must be arrived at in a clear and transparent manner and stakeholders should agree that their input has been actively solicited and considered.
- Members of the media are welcome in all stakeholder meetings, but must remain in the role of observers, not participants in the process.

These ground rules are tentative, pending acceptance by the CAG members, and are not immutable.

AGREEMENT

We the members of the Community Advisory Group (CAG), Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), and Consultant Team do here by understand the Mission, Objectives, Roles, Responsibilities, and Ground Rules of the Community Advisory Group. We enter into this partnership agreeing to always remain united as a team; remain focused on our collective goals and objectives; promote trust and team work within the group; and supportive of the CAG process.

Signed by the members of the Community Advisory Group (CAG), Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), and the consultant team on September 12, 2007

Frequently Asked Questions:

The Project Study Group Responds To Your Questions

1. How were CAG members selected?

The PSG assessed which organizations and interests they believed were associated with the US 30 project and compared this information with public comment forms completed at the first Public Information Meeting. The PSG selected members based on the goal of providing a balanced representation of the community's interest.

2. Can anyone attend the CAG meetings?

Anyone can attend the CAG meetings, however CAG members are the only ones that are actively engaged in the exercises, discussions, and decision-making processes.

3. Will the public have a chance to comment on the decisions made by the CAG?

Yes. Public meetings are scheduled at major milestones throughout this process. Please check the website (<http://www.dot.state.il.us/us30/index1.html>) or your local newspaper for meeting announcements. Comments and questions can always be voiced through the project website or project hotline (1-866-ROUTE 30).

4. Is it possible for other interested citizens to join the CAG as the project progresses?

If the PSG believes adequate representation is not being provided through the established CAG, an individual may be asked to join the CAG. Continuity is very important in the CSS process and therefore a decision such as this would be given great consideration.

5. What process is in place for the community to voice their opinion to the CAG?

If you have an issue you would like to have discussed at a CAG meeting, please call the project hotline, write to the project address shown on page 6, or send an email via the project website. The PSG will either include your question on the CAG meeting agenda or will put you in contact with the CAG member they believe best represents the issue you wish to have addressed.

6. What if a CAG member is not effectively representing their particular interest group?

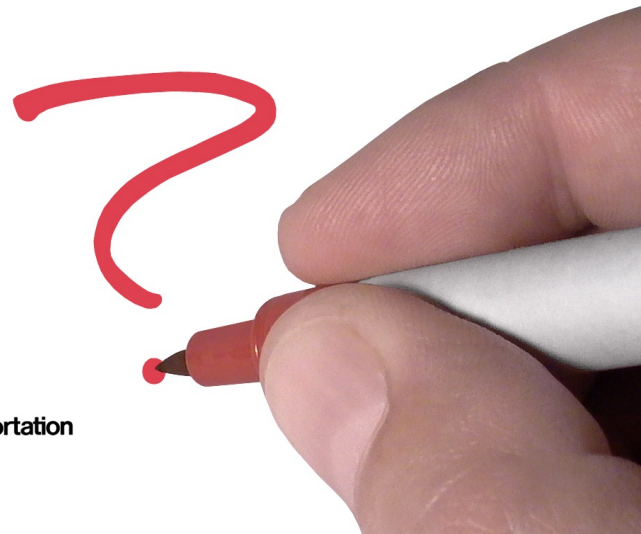
The PSG will continuously evaluate the CAG members' involvement. If it is determined that a group is not being sufficiently represented by a current CAG member, the PSG will work with that interest group to determine if there is a more suitable representative to serve on the CAG. This is a decision that would be given great consideration and be handled on a case-by-case basis.

7. How can I stay informed on the study's progress?

The PSG has developed a comprehensive Stakeholder Involvement Plan to keep the public informed and involved in the ongoing study. Newsletter mailings will continue throughout the project. In addition, the project website will be updated regularly to provide information regarding the project's progress and upcoming public involvement events.

8. How will the new transportation system affect the environment?

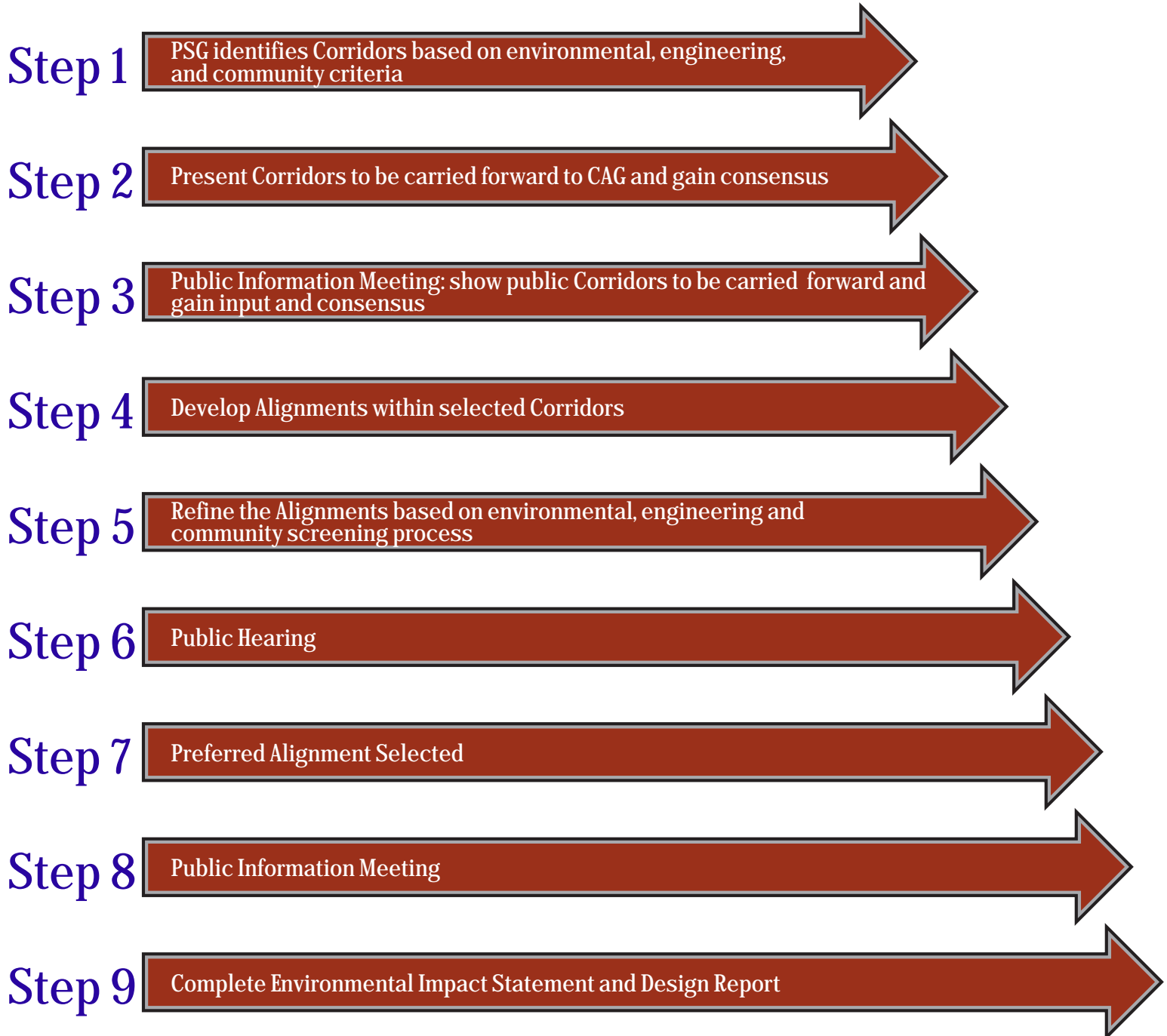
As part of the Environmental Impact Statement process, numerous field surveys of the natural and manmade environments are currently being conducted. The survey results will be used to identify a transportation system that addresses the project's purpose and need while avoiding, minimizing, or mitigating adverse environmental impacts.



What's Next?

Project Team Coordination

The PSG, which includes IDOT, FHWA, and the consultant team, will gain input from the CAG and begin identifying corridors based on engineering, environmental, and community concerns. After viable corridors have been developed in coordination with the CAG, the PSG will coordinate a Public Information Meeting so that the general public can review and provide input on the corridors to be carried forward for further study and development. It is anticipated that the next Public Information Meeting will be held in the Spring of 2008.



US 30 Environmental Impact
Statement and Phase I Design Report
US 30 Joint Venture Team
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Project Study Team

Lead Agencies

Federal Highway Administration
(FHWA)

Illinois Department of Transportation
(IDOT)

Consultant Team

Volkert & Associates, Inc.
Project Management Consultant
(Joint Venture)

Howard R. Green Company
Project Management Consultant
(Joint Venture)

Goodpaster-Jamison, Inc.
Environmental Consultant

Hudson And Associates, LLC.
Context Sensitive Solutions/Public
Involvement Consultant

Kaskaskia Engineering Group
GIS/Mapping Consultant



Illinois Department of Transportation

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!!!

PLEASE VISIT THE US 30 WEB SITE

www.dot.il.gov/us30/index1.html or
call our project hotline 1-866-ROUTE 30

Learn more about:

- Project Updates
- Public Involvement Activities
- Resource Information
- Submit Questions or Comments

